

The Younger Set

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS,
Author of "The Fighting Chance," Etc.

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"Yes—indeed, yes! And, Phil, she—I don't know how to say it—but she—when she spoke of—of you—begged me to try to be like you. And it is a lie what people say about her—what gossip says. I know. I have known her so well—and I was like other men—charmed and fascinated by her, but the women of that set are a pack of cats, and the men—well, none of them ever ventured to say anything to me! And that is all, Philip. I was horribly in debt to Neergard. Then Ruthven turned on me—and on her, and I borrowed more from Neergard and went to her bank and deposited it to the credit of her account, but she doesn't know it was from me. She supposes Jack Ruthven did it out of ordinary decency, for she said so to me. And that is how matters stand. Neergard is ugly and grows more threatening about those loans, and I haven't any money, and Mrs. Ruthven will require more very soon."

"Is that all?" demanded Selwyn sharply.

"Yes, all. I know I have behaved shamefully."

"I've seen," observed Selwyn in a dry, hard voice, "worse behavior than yours. Have you a pencil, Gerald? Get a sheet of paper from that desk. Now, write out a list of the loans made by Neergard—every cent, if you please—and the exact amount you placed to Mrs. Ruthven's credit. Have you written that? Let me see it."

The boy handed him the paper. He studied it without the slightest change of expression, knowing all the while what it meant to him, knowing that this burden must be assumed by himself, because Austin would never assume it. But the thought of the cost sent a shiver over him and left his careworn face gray.

After a moment he turned to Gerald, a smile on his colorless face, and said:

"It will be all right, my boy. You are not to worry. Do you understand me? Go to bed now. You need the sleep. Go to bed, I tell you. I'll stand by you. You must begin all over again, Gerald, and so must I—and so must I."

Chapter 22

SELWYN had gone to New York with Gerald "for a few days," as he expressed it, but it was now the first week in October, and he had not yet returned to Silverside.

A brief note to Nina thanking her for having had him at Silverside and speaking vaguely of some business matters which might detain him indefinitely; a brief note to Eileen regretting his inability to return for the present, were all the communications they had from him except news brought by Austin, who came down from town every Friday.

A long letter to him from Nina still remained unanswered. Austin had seen him only once in town. Lansing, now back in New York, wrote a postscript in a letter to Drina, asking for Selwyn's new address, the first intimation anybody had that he had given up his lodgings on Lexington avenue.

Eileen had not written him. His sudden leave taking nearly a month ago had so astounded her that she could not believe he meant to be gone more than a day or two. Then came his note, written at the Patrons' club, very brief, curiously stilted and formal, with a strange tone of finality through it, as though he were taking perfunctory leave of people who had come temporarily into his life and as though the chances were agreeably even of his ever seeing them again.

The girl was not hurt as yet; she remained merely confused, incredulous, unreconciled.

It was possible now to ride cross country, and Nina, who was always in terror of an added ounce to her perfect figure, rode every day with Eileen, and Austin, on a big hunter, joined them two days in the week.

There were dances, too, and Nina went to some of them. So did Eileen, who had created a furore among the younger brothers and undergraduates, and the girl was busy enough with sailing and motoring and dashing through the sound in all sorts of power boats.

Truly, for her, the world was still green, the sun bright, the high sky blue, but she had not forgotten that the earth had been greener, the sun brighter, the azure above her more splendid—once upon a time—like the first phrase of a tale that is told. And if she were at times listless, absent eyed, subdued, a trifle graver or unusually silent, seeking the still paths of the garden as though in need of youthful meditation and the quiet of the sunset hour, she never doubted that that tale would be retold for her again. Only, alas, the fair days were passing, and the russet rustle of October sounded already among the curling leaves in the garden, and he had been away a long time, a very long time, and she could not understand.

On one of Austin's week end visits,

the hour for conjugal confab having arrived between husband and wife, he said, with a trace of irritation in his voice:

"I don't know where Phil is or what he's about. I'm wondering—he's got the Selwyn conscience, you know—what he's up to and if it's any kind of damfoolishness. Haven't you heard a word from him, Nina?"

Nina, in her pretty night attire, had emerged from her dressing room, locked out Kit-Ki and her maid and had curled up in a big, soft armchair, cradling her bare ankles in her hand.

"I haven't heard from him," she said. "Rosamund saw him in Washington—passed him on the street. He was looking horribly thin and worn. She wrote. He did not see her."

"Now, what in the name of common sense is he doing in Washington?" exclaimed Austin wrathfully. "Probably breaking his heart because nobody cares to examine his chaotic life. By the way, Nina, Gerald has done rather an unexpected thing. I saw him last night. He came to the house and told me that he had just severed his connection with Julius Neergard's company."

"I'm glad of it!" exclaimed Nina. "I'm glad he showed the good sense to do it!"

"Well, yes. As a matter of fact, Neergard is going to be a very rich man some day, and Gerald might have— But I am not displeased. What appeals to me is the spectacle of the boy acting with conviction on his own initiative. Of course he can, if he chooses, begin everything again and come in with me, or, if I am satisfied that he has any ability, he can set up some sort of real estate office on his own hook."

Nina hesitated, another idea intruding.

"Austin, the Orchil boy, the one in Harvard, proposed to Eileen, the little idiot! She told me. Thank goodness, she still does tell me things! Also the younger and chubbier Draymore youth has offered himself after a killing proper interview with me. I thought it might amuse you to hear of it."

"It might amuse me more if Eileen would get busy and bring Philip into camp," observed her husband.

"Do you know," said Nina, "that I believe he is in love with her?"

"Then why doesn't?"

"I don't know. I was sure—I am sure now—that the girl cares more for him than for anybody. And yet—and yet I don't believe she is actually in love with him."

After a moment Nina's face grew grave, and she bent forward.

"Alix is ill. Nobody seems to know what the matter is. Nobody has seen her. But she's at Clifton, with a couple of nurses, and Rosamund heard rumors that she is very ill indeed. People go to Clifton for shattered nerves, you know. There is mental trouble in her family. You have heard of it as well as I. You know her father died of it."

"The usual defense in criminal cases," observed Austin, flicking his cigarette end into the grate. "I'm sorry, dear, that Alix has the jumps. Hope she'll get over 'em. But, as for pretending I've any use for her, I can't and don't and won't. She spoiled life for the best man I know. She kicked his reputation into a cocked hat, and he, with his chivalrous Selwyn conscience, let her do it. I did like her once. I don't like her now, and that's natural, and it winds up the matter."

Ruthven was at that very moment seated in a private card room at the Stuyvesant club with Sanxon Orchil, George Fane and Bradley Harmon, and the game had been bridge, as usual, and had gone very heavily against him.

Several things had gone against Mr. Ruthven recently. For one thing, he was beginning to realize that he had made a vast mistake in mixing himself up in any transactions with Neergard.

When he, at Neergard's cynical suggestion, had consented to exploit his own club—the Slowth—and had consented to resign from it to do so, he had every reason to believe that Neergard meant either to mulct them heavily or buy them out. In either case, having been useful to Neergard, his profits from the transaction would have been considerable.

But even while he was absorbed in figuring them up—and he needed the money, as usual—Neergard coolly informed him of his election to the club, and Ruthven, thunderstruck, began to perceive the depth of the underground mole tunnels which Neergard had dug to undermine and capture the stronghold which had now surrendered to him.

Rage made him ill for a week, but there was nothing to do about it. He had been treacherous to his club and to his own caste, and Neergard knew it, and knew perfectly well that Ruthven dared not protest, dared not even whimper.

Then Neergard began to use Ruthven when he needed him, and he began to permit himself to win at cards in Ruthven's house, a thing he had not dared to do before. He also permitted himself more ease and freedom in that

house, a sort of intimacy, even a certain jocularity.

Meanwhile Neergard had almost finished with Gerald. He had only one further use for him, and as his social success became more pronounced with the people he had crowded in among, he became bolder and more insolent, no longer at pains to mole tunnel toward the object desired, no longer overcareful about his mask. And one day he asked the boy very plainly why he had never invited him to meet his sister. And he got an answer that he never forgot.

Ruthven had viewed with indifference Gerald's boyish devotion to his wife, which was even too open and naive to be of interest to those who witnessed it. But he had not counted on Neergard's sudden hatred of Gerald, and the first token of that hatred fell upon the boy like a thunderbolt when Neergard whispered to Ruthven one night at the Stuyvesant club and Ruthven, exasperated, had gone straight home, to find his wife in tears and the boy clumsily attempting to comfort her, both her hands in his.

"Perhaps," said Ruthven coldly, "you have some plausible explanation for this sort of thing. If you haven't, you'd better trump up one together, and I'll send you my attorney to hear it. In that event," he added, "you'd better leave your joint address when you find a more convenient house than mine."

As a matter of fact, he had really meant nothing more than the threat and the insult, the situation permitting him a heavier hold upon his wife and a new grip on Gerald in case he ever needed him, but threat and insult were very real to the boy, and he knocked Mr. Ruthven flat on his back, the one thing required to change that gentleman's pretense to deadly earnest.

Ruthven scrambled to his feet. Gerald did it again, and after that Mr. Ruthven prudently remained prone during the delivery of a terse but concise opinion of him expressed by Gerald.

After Gerald had gone Ruthven opened first one eye, then the other, then his mouth and finally sat up, and his wife, who had been curiously observing him, smiled.

She dropped her folded hands into her lap, gazing coolly at him, but there was a glitter in her eyes which arrested his first step toward her.

"I think," she said, "that you mean my ruin. My mind has become curiously clear during the last year—strangely and unusually limpid and precise. Why, my poor friend, every plot of yours and of your friends, every underhand attempt to discredit and injure me, has been perfectly apparent to me. You supposed that my headaches, my outbursts of anger, my wretched nights, passed in tears, and the long, long days spent kneeling in the ashes of dead memories, all these you supposed had weakened, perhaps unsettled, my mind. You lie if you deny it, for you have had doctors watching me for months. You didn't know I was aware of it, did you? But I was, and I am. And you told them that my father died of—of brain trouble, you coward! What a credulous fool you are," she said, "to build your hopes of a separation on any possible mental disability of mine!"

He stood a moment without answering, then quietly seated himself. The suspicious glimmer in his faded eyes had become the concentration of a curiosity almost apprehensive.

"Go on," he said. "What else?"

"For the remainder of the spring and summer," she said, "I shall make my plans regardless of you. I shall not go to Newport. You are at liberty to use the house there as you choose. And, as for this incident with Gerald, you had better not pursue it any further. Do you understand?"

He nodded, dropping his hands into his coat pockets.

"Now you may go," she said coolly.

He went, not, however, to his room, but straight to the house of the fashionable physician who ministered to wealth with an unctious and success that had permitted him in summer time to occupy his own villa at Newport and dispense further ministrations when requested.

On the night of the conjugal conference between Nina Gerard and her husband and almost at the same hour Jack Ruthven, hard hit in the card room of the Stuyvesant club, sat huddled over the table, figuring up what sort of checks he was to draw to the credit of George Fane and Sanxon Orchil.

And now as he sat there, pencil in hand, adding up the score cards he remembered that he was to interview his attorney that evening at his own house, a late appointment, but necessary to insure the presence of one or two physicians at a consultation to definitely decide what course of action might be taken to rid himself of the wife who had proved useless and almost ruinous to him.

He had not laid eyes on his wife that summer, but for the first time he had really had her watched during her absence. What she lived on, how she managed, he had not the least idea and less concern. All he knew was that he had contributed nothing, and he was quite certain that her balance at her own bank had been nonexistent for months. In the autumn he had heard of her conduct at Hitherwood House, and a week later, to his astonishment, he learned of her serious illness and that she had been taken to Clifton. It was the only satisfactory news he had had of her in months.

(To be continued.)

ANYTHING

LOST—ound, for sale, for rent, advertisement in the classified column of

JUDICIAL PRIMARY IS

TO BE HELD SATURDAY.

Judges Fryer and Osborne Will Contest For the Nomination.

CARLISLE, Ky., Nov. 3.—Now that the general election is over the Democrats of Nicholas county and the four counties of the Eighteenth Judicial District have turned their attention to the race for the Democratic nomination for Circuit Judge between Judge L. P. Fryer, of Cynthia, the present incumbent, and former Circuit Judge James J. Osborne, also of Cynthia, which will be decided at the primary election to be held in the district Saturday, November 7.

Both candidates for the nomination are making an aggressive fight and thoroughly canvassing the district. Each candidate has issued a letter which has been sent out to the Democratic voters of the district advancing their respective claims for the support of the Democracy. A close finish is expected and the result cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty.

ITALIANS DEMANDING

TRUTH FROM ABRUZZI.

Want Duke to Confirm or Deny Report of Marriage of Miss Elkins.

ROME, Nov. 3.—The Tribuna, which is a government organ, in an article on the marriage of the Duke of the Abruzzi, says that the majority of Italians, while preferring that the Duke should marry a royal princess, do not deny that he should follow the dictates of his own heart, but they demand that the question of his marriage to Miss Elkins be officially confirmed or denied, thus putting an end to the fusillade of the American newspapers, which deeply wounds the Italian sensibilities and may result in a reaction in public opinion.

MATHEWSON WANTS A RAISE.

Says He Will Get More Money or Quit the Giants.

NEW YORK, Nov. 3.—Christy Mathewson, star pitcher of the Giants, is the first ball player to make the annual threat to quit the diamond unless he gets a bigger salary than he drew the past season. It is said that the figures in Matty's new contract must be double those in the old or he won't sign it and will pitch life insurance policies all next summer instead of baseballs.

It is said that Mathewson's stipend for the six months of work every summer is \$4,000, and that in addition he pulled down a dandy little bonus. But Matty says he sure worked for it. According to the statements he will use to defend his demand for a raise, Christy did practically all the work for the Giants, and it was his clever hurling that kept the New York gang in the float all summer. Having done the work of three men makes him think his salary should be commensurate. Some of his friends kidded him by saying he should have won the final game from the Cubs to warrant his request for the raise, but he replied that the Giants wouldn't have been in the final game had it not been for his work throughout the season.

The New York Club maintains a discreet and dignified silence on the subject. Betting is that Matty will get the raise. It is said he would have had it anyway, whether he asked it or not.

PRESIDENT ELLIOTT RESIGNS.

Head of Harvard University Gives Up His Place.

BOSTON, Mass., Nov. 3.—President Charles W. Elliott, for more than thirty years the head of Harvard University, tendered his resignation October 26, to take effect May 19, 1909, according to an announcement made today by the Harvard Board of Overseers. The resignation has been accepted.

Charles William Elliott was born in Boston in 1834, and was graduated by Harvard University in 1853. He at once became tutor at Harvard and was advanced steadily until his election to the presidency in 1868.

LOUISVILLE FURNITURE MAN

IS KILLED BY HIS PARTNER.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Nov. 3.—S. C. Moore, a furniture dealer, was shot and killed last night by his partner, Frank Hockensmith, at their place of business, on Market street near Ninth. The men engaged in a quarrel over a business deal and when the clash came, Hockensmith emptied the contents of a double-barrel gun into Moore's body. Both men were members of well known Kentucky families.

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